



**What would you do if you had the power and opportunity to punish your enemies?**

**READ GENESIS 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21**

Jacob had many sons. In ancient times the oldest son was favored, but not here. Jacob loved his young son Joseph the most, and he didn't hide his preference. The famous "coat of many colors" that Jacob gave Joseph was proof of Joseph's golden-child status. When Joseph's brothers saw this, "they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him." Do you blame them?

At 17, Joseph had a dream in which the whole world, including his brothers, bowed down to him. Foolishly, Joseph shared this dream with them, and they grew so angry that they sold him into slavery. Joseph held it together through slavery and even jail time, eventually gaining the trust of important Egyptian people who recognized Joseph's wisdom and raised him up to become a powerful official in the Pharaoh's court.

Under Joseph's supervision, massive amounts of grain from Egypt's abundant harvests were stockpiled, so that during the lengthy famine that followed, Egypt was able to feed many nations and grow wealthy in the process. During that famine, Joseph's starving brothers came to Egypt seeking food. These men who had sold Joseph into slavery now knelt before him, powerless and at his mercy. What would you do if you were Joseph?

**REMEMBER: Genesis 50:21**

Joseph speaks to his brothers, who kneel before him:  
*"Now, don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." So he put them at ease and spoke reassuringly to them.*

**NEXT WEEK: Exodus 12:1-3; 13:1-8**



## RELATIONSHIP

**DAY 1:** This story is about a dysfunctional family filled with jealousy and grudges, but very little empathy. Does that sound familiar? Are there relationships in your life that are as raw and painful as those in this story? Has human nature changed much since this story was first told?



## RESURRECTION

**DAY 2:** What does Joseph do with this cycle of hatred, jealousy and distrust that's consuming his family? Joseph has the perfect opportunity to stick it to them, to make them pay for what they did. What does he choose? Why?



## SURPRISE

**DAY 3:** In this country, now, do we see Joseph's choice as weakness or strength? Do we as a nation crave justice when we've been wronged? Do we routinely work for justice for other people? Think about refugees, the Black Lives Matter movement, the Dakota pipeline conflict, and the treatment of Muslims, women and the LGBT community. Where is there a gap between our need to exact justice for ourselves, and our need to work for justice for other people? Do we, as Christians, need to step into that gap? If so, how?



## SURPRISE

**DAY 4:** How can we make sense of Joseph's choices in this story when we live in a society of extreme inequality and a wide economic gap? Can we simply forgive each other and move on? Is it more complicated than that? Should it be? Does your demographic affect your answer? How?



## PRESENCE

**DAY 5:** The text says that God was with Joseph throughout this story. Is God also with those who don't have Joseph's happy ending? Is status a sign of God's favor?



## PROGRESS

**DAY 6:** How is this story calling you? Do you need to let go of old wounds and start to forgive? What do you do when the wounds are so deep and so profound that forgiveness seems impossible, or even dangerous?



## CHARACTER

**DAY 7:** Is there someone else's struggle that you need to pick up? How are you like Joseph, in a position to use your gifts to bless someone who is in need of help?